

Remarks

The Examiner has indicated that Claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended Claims 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18 and 19 accordingly, and therefore respectfully submit that these claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1–5 and 11–15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,950,107 (“Huff”) in view of U.S. Patent 6,200,866 (“Ma”). Claims 8 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being unpatentable over Huff in view of Ma and U.S. Patent 6,107,192 (“Subrahmanyam”). Claims 1 and 11 have been cancelled. Claims 2–4, 8, 12–14 and 17 have been amended to depend on one of the claims that the Examiner has indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Claims 5 and 15, although not amended, now also indirectly depend on one of the claims that the Examiner has indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn.

**Comments on Statement of Reasons for the
Indication of Allowable Subject Matter**

In the Examiner’s statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter (“Statement”), the Examiner has listed certain elements which are neither taught nor suggested by the prior art of record. Applicants note that certain of the allowable claims do not contain any of the elements listed by the Examiner. Applicants therefore respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s Statement to the extent it implies that certain unrecited elements are required by certain claims. The Examiner’s statement of reasons for allowance is the personal opinion of the Examiner as to why the claims are allowable, and should not create an estoppel with respect to future claim construction. See MPEP 1302.14.

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Amendment dated **31 August 2004**
Reply to Office Action of **2 June 2004**


Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments, the Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully request the same. If, however, some issue remains that the Examiner feels can be addressed by an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned for authorization.

Respectfully submitted,

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